



February 21, 2013

Senator Harp, Representative Walker, Members of the Committee:

The Connecticut Youth Services Association wishes to thank this committee and the Legislature for the support which you have shown the Connecticut Youth Services Association and the 102 Youth Service Bureaus in the state of Connecticut. We would like you take this opportunity to remind the Legislature that youth service bureaus stand ready to work with officials from state and local government in ensuring the safety of our children and families' in our schools and communities.

As many of you may already know, YSBs are statutorily required to be the coordinating agency for prevention, intervention, mental health, juvenile diversion and positive youth development services in their respective communities. We have been successfully providing these programs and services for over 40 years. Our dedication to the Results Based Accountability initiative is evident in our recent report card developed in partnership with the State Department of Education and presented to the General assembly for review. This report highlights the success of Connecticut YSB's use of evidence based programs, measurable outcomes and data collection efforts to evaluate what we are doing, how well we are doing it, and who is better off as a result of our programs and services.

Often the comfort and familiarity that children and families have with their local YSB has a history. Children who feel connected to a network of caring adults, and believe they can ask for help, and adults that are aware of the needs of children provides an opportunity to access the services that may be needed. Often, schools refer to and partner with YSBs in their efforts to provide students and their families with the support they need in many situations such as family discord, crisis intervention, and counseling services. Schools also often call upon their local YSBs to be part of the crisis response teams when tragedy occurs.

YSBs remain committed to enhancing the social, emotional, mental, and physical health of our children and families in the 145 communities in which we serve and operate in Connecticut. We welcome your input and questions regarding our programs and services and encourage any of you to contact us directly anytime. Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony today.

Respectfully submitted by: Barbara A. Lockhart, President Connecticut Youth Services Association,
Executive Director of Youth Services, Town of Montville